



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Billings Field Office  
5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, Montana 59101-4669  
[www.blm.gov/montana-dakotas](http://www.blm.gov/montana-dakotas)

In Reply Refer To:  
1278 (MT954.LC)  
BLM-2019-00196  
MT-2019-12

January 30, 2019

EMS TRANSMISSION – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Jimmy Tobias  
Pacific Standard  
801 Garden Street, Suite 101  
Santa Barbara, California 93101  
[64435-24848339@requests.muckrock.com](mailto:64435-24848339@requests.muckrock.com)

Dear Mr. Tobias:

This letter is in response to your November 29, 2018, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request received at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Montana State Office on that date; FOIA control number BLM-2019-00196.

In your request, you seek:

"Any and all written or electronic communications, including email attachments and texts, between the senior leadership of BLM's Montana State Office (including Acting State Director Jon Raby, Communications Director Al Nash, Deputy State Director Mike Philbin, Kimber Liebhauser, Kim Prill and/or Stephen Thompson) and any representative, agent, employee or executive of one or more of the following oil and gas firms: Highlands Natural Resources, Highlands Montana, and/or Halliburton."

Enclosed is our first release of records responsive to your request (7 pages). These records are being released to you in their entirety. We are continuing to review additional records responsive to your request. We anticipate that Exemptions 2, 5, and 6 may be applied to parts of the records.

The BLM uses a multitrack system to process FOIA requests. We place each FOIA request into one of four processing tracks based on the number of workdays we expect it will take to complete processing. We designate the basic processing tracks as follows: simple requests (one to five workdays), normal requests (six to twenty workdays), complex requests (twenty-one to sixty workdays), and exceptional/voluminous requests (over sixty workdays).

Your request falls into the complex processing track. We anticipate that we will complete the final response on or after March 29, 2019. We plan to provide interim responses to you until we complete processing your request. The BLM ordinarily responds to requests according to order of receipt within each processing track.

You may narrow the scope of your request. This can result in quicker processing within the assigned track or move your request into a faster track. See 43 CFR § 2.14, 2.15, and 2.19. We have enclosed your mandatory exclusionary statement, rights to public liaison and Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) mediation services.

If you have questions, please contact Sally Sheeks, State FOIA Coordinator, at (406) 896-5157; Lynnell Cellmer, Records Management Specialist, at (406) 896-5381; or by email at [blm\\_mt\\_foia@blm.gov](mailto:blm_mt_foia@blm.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Joshua F. Alexander".

Joshua F. Alexander  
Acting Deputy State Director  
Division of Energy, Minerals & Realty

Enclosures

1-Responsive Records (7 pp)

2-MES, Public Liaison, and OGIS Mediation Services (1 p)